COLVIN'S WEEKLY REGISTER.

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THE EMBARGO.—The wisdom of a government is never so conspicuous, as when with the means of waging war on just grounds, it strains the nerve of authority to preserve peace. A vigorous race of men, prone to adventurous undertakings, high spirited, tenacious of individual and national rights, and cheered to an energetic conception of their own physical strength by the stimulus of an overflowing treasury, are incitements to war sufficiently powerful to seduce a government with a very small portion of ambition to enter the field of Mars, on the first and most slender pretext that might offer. Yet what have we beheld? Under all these allurements to appear in the lists of contention; amidst the cries of every party for vengeance, and with the most justifiable grounds for hostilities; the American government, tempering the ardor of its citizens, as the last great evidence of its desire to preserve harmony with the nations of Europe lays an embargo on its own shipping in its own ports; and with a promptness which proves its sincerity and candor, proclaims its willingness to receive from one nation, whose multiplied outrages upon the persons and property of the citizens of the United States have exceeded all the reasonable bounds of forbearance, a minister extraordinary as the harbinger of peace and future amity. At what period of time, in what age of the world, has any nation of this globe, within the knowledge of man, exhibited a spectacle so truly interesting? It is the head of Minerva restraining the limbs of Hercules!

If the government of the United States had been influenced by considerations relative to its popularity, the republic would unquestionably, at this moment, be in a state of war; for the public voice, too loudly and decisively expressed to be mistaken, universally called to arms. A sentiment of humanity, however, (which men of fierce tempers may, perhaps, be disposed to condemn,) and a strong hope that offending nations would return to a sense of justice after a season, no doubt induced the American government to venture something of its fame with a virtuous and enlightened community, by repressing the impatient disposition of the citizens for hostilities. Addresses, containing pledges of affection and offers of military service, from numerous and spontaneous town meetings, from associated, armed and disciplined corps of militia, and from the legislatures of the states, in all parts of the Union, were received by the administration with a lively moderation, which zealous men might have mistaken for want of energy, but which was peculiarly characteristic of the magnanimous feelings of the government.

Yet something was due from the supreme authority of the country, to the sensibilities of a people so generous and gallant. It would have been cruel in the government had it neglected to secure to so much patriotism and courage the means necessary to their efficient exertion in case a war should unhappily occur. It was proper, too, to convey to foreign nations a masculine idea of the sacrifices which the citizens of the United

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States are willing to incur when a suitable occasion shall demand them, and at the same time to impress hostile powers with a true conception of the sincere desire for peace which the American government fondly cherishes. An embargo is a measure which precisely suits the exigency of the times: It is a pledge to the people of America that the administration is sensible of the peril of the crisis, and widely awake to the precious feelings which animate their hearts; whilst it proclaims to the world that nothing is demanded from European powers but a friendly disposition and the due manifestation of it, to restore between the United States and themselves the tone of harmony and good fellowship. The embargo, likewise, operates as the conservator of the invaluable resources of the nation; as the preserver of our seamen and of our ships. The experience of modern times has shown, that the *act* of war frequently *precedes* the *declaration* of it. The peculiar situation of American affairs justifies an apprehension that it may assail this country at an unexpected moment, sudden as the lightning of Heaven. In such a moment it would be in vain that we should call upon our seamen, when navigating our vessels on distant seas, to aid in the defence of their country; it would be worse than senseless to call in such a perilous hour upon the government to authorise an organization of the marine force of the nation, when that force was scattered over the surface of the ocean, unarmed and subjected to the imminent risk of capture by the enemy: Our coasts might be ravaged, our cities and towns bombarded, at the first blush of war, with partial impunity, were our mariners far away, were our ships engaged in distant commerce at the time. The sailor is alone competent to render effectual service on that element where the first battles of a foreign war must be fought; his experience, his skill, are dear to his country. The soldier, with equal bravery, is calculated particularly for land service; and on the water could only become an auxiliary. A hostile squadron might approach the place of his residence, which contained his wife, his children, his father, his friends, and from a distance attempt to destroy it; his heart might palpitate for vengeance, his cheek might crimson with indignation, but the fire of passion would fruitlessly blaze; he must remain on the shore, a convulsed spectator of the ruin of property and destruction of lives by an insolent foe, who, after glutting a ferocious disposition for havoc and desolation, might depart in triumph, glorying in the success of his audacity. The soldier might, indeed, in such a case be hurried by the impetuosity of his feelings to adventure from the land; but then, he would exhaust his courage to no efficient purpose without the art of the sailor to guide him; and on the water fall a victim to that excessive animation of soul, which on the land would have given a tremendous and decisive energy to the bayonet. And what better method can be devised by the ingenuity of man, since seamen and ships are of such vast importance to the security and defence of the nation, than an embargo? It assures to the United States at the first approaches of war, the instantaneous use of the most inestimable resources. The sound of an enemy's cannon within our waters, or off our coasts, in a hostile manner, would be the signal of glory for American seamen. To whatever pursuits the embargo may coerce them, whe-

ther they are engaged in agricultural labors or mechanical avocations, they would fly on the first summons of their country to their favorite element, and not only defend with vigor, in conjunction with their fellow-citizens on the land, their native shore; but constrain the enemy by their enterprizing expeditions on the ocean, to guard with vigilant circumspection at a distance from our ports, his own property committed for transportation to the bosom of the deep. In another point of view, also, the embargo may be of incalculable importance: The supplies which the United States have heretofore furnished, either directly or indirectly, to Great-Britain, France, Spain, and their colonies, will now be withheld; and the subjects of these powers must experience the inconveniences of that privation, which reflection will teach them arises out of the arbitrary acts of their own respective governments. Thus, although the embargo is not a war measure, foreign nations and their dependencies will necessarily *feel*, that it is at least a desirable and a profitable thing to be on good terms with us.

Independent of these considerations, the people in general called for information from the government on the situation of the country. Reproaches were lavishly thrown upon the executive by a certain portion of the community for concealing the real position of the United States in regard to foreign powers; and the friends of the administration themselves manifested an eagerness for information from an official source by which they might regulate their various concerns. Men were fearful of committing their property to the ocean under equivocal circumstances; and the universal anxiety on the subject made a corresponding impression on the American cabinet. Some measure, therefore, was to be taken, which without being just provocation of war from abroad, should convey to the citizens of the United States a precise idea of the peculiar difficulties of the crisis that existed. The embargo exactly effected the object. It announced plainly, that although war was not certain, yet it was necessary to use strong precautionary means in order to meet that event in the most energetic manner.

The interruption to commerce which the embargo necessarily occasions, cannot be a cause of very deep regret to honest men trading upon sound arithmetical principles. The British government, exercising an arbitrary power on the high seas over neutral flags, had by a series of unlawful acts so strangely perverted the fundamental laws of nations, that France, seizing the occasion offered by the universal complaints made against the conduct of the British, issued the decree of Nov. 21, 1806, the provisions of which were adopted and enforced by Spain and other allies of France, immediately afterwards: This decree was followed by a retaliating British order in January 1807, prohibiting neutrals from carrying on their customary trade between the different ports of those powers which were at war with Great-Britain. Retaliation of this kind was met on the part of France by a more extensive and more rigid construction of the decree of November 1806; and the spirit that prevails among the belligerent nations leaves no room to doubt tha the British government will immediately resort in turn to measures still more destructive to neutral commerce. In such a position of affairs, which ren-

dersthe ocean a scene of continual disaster, and makes the ports of France and her allies on the one hand, and those of Great-Britain and her dependencies on the other, a perfect Scylla and Charybdis for American vessels, what great profit could the merchants of the United States in general expect to reap by driving a trade on the Caribbean, European, or Indian seas? A few individuals might, with great good fortune, derive some benefit by rashly adventuring; but the mass of commercial men would inevitably experience nothing but obstacles and ruin. The agricultural and mechanical interests would likewise come in for a full share of calamity: The farmer, confiding in the ability of the merchant to pay him, and who, perhaps, had always paid him punctually in better times, in giving a credit to the purchaser of his produce, must inevitably lose by the bankruptcy of his debtor; and the artizan could not expect to receive pay for his labor, when his employer had been deprived of the means of satisfying his claim.

The inconveniences of an embargo in truth, in the present circumstances of the world, are rather *unpleasant* than *injurious*. If we consider that food and many other articles will be cheaper; and that if the price of labor falls, the price of things of the first necessity for the sustenance and comfort of families will descend in the same proportion, it will be perceived there is a *solid benefit* growing out of the embargo that more than counterbalances the loss of any *luxury*, however agreeable to the palate or to the fancy. The monied capital which has been engaged in foreign trade will be expended on internal improvements; and although the profit may not be so immediate and considerable, yet the expenditure will tend more to the permanent interests of the country, the advantages arising from it be more durable, and perfectly in harmony with the finest sentiments of the most exalted patriotism.

It is naturally to be expected, however, that some despondency will take place in the public mind in consequence of the primary aspect of the embargo; although, on the whole, when the subject is thoroughly examined, there is more room for sturdy congratulation than for puling lamentation: But care should be taken to discriminate between that depression which is the reasonable effect of such a measure, and that which is *artificially* excited. Many individuals will make it a pretence for bankruptcy; some for delaying the liquidation of their debts; and others will affect to deplore it in order to effect a political diversion in the public mind; and all these incidents will enforce their due impression on the community: Yet, perhaps, if an accurate estimate could be made of the average number of insolvencies at the present moment or some time hence, and of the amount of delinquent debtors, together with an average calculation of the clamor directed against the administration, they would not be found to exceed by very little more than a cypher, either in number or extent, what has been customary when commerce had its usual scope and trade enjoyed its widest range.

Those who contend that the embargo will produce war, are not sufficiently anxious for the character of their understandings. Blockaded and counter-blockaded by France and G. Britain, till our vessels were nearly outlawed from Europe, with what color of propriety can those powers

come forward and declare themselves justly offended by the operation of an act so impartial in its nature? Certainly if they have the right to say our trade shall be circumscribed, we have the right to relinquish it altogether, and to resume it when we please. It would be singular, indeed, if foreign governments could exercise a right over us which we cannot inoffensively exercise over ourselves! The moment that the embargo is made a pretext for hostility, there will be no longer any doubt that war was decided upon previously to the adoption of that measure.

The outcry that an embargo will ruin the country, is almost too frivolous to be regarded. It is impossible to ruin by such an act any nation, the basis of whose wealth is agriculture. An embargo did not injure us in the year 1794, a period at which the U. States were by no means so wealthy and powerful as they are at present; And so salutary was the measure considered then, that a great majority of the people were of opinion it ought to have been continued for a longer time; an idea which the government under president Washington corroborated by extending the duration of the restriction from thirty to sixty days. It would be a most lamentable discovery if we should find that a period of thirteen years had only rendered us more incapable of supporting a temporary inconvenience. The increase of population and riches, in that case, will have merely made us more imbecile; and *progressing in the same tender way*, in fifty years more the American people would be incapable of sustaining even the *rude shock* of a delay occasioned by the *impertinent contrariness* of the winds!

And what man of common sense can lend his ear for a single instant, to the stupid tale that the embargo has been occasioned by *French influence?* I know of no instance of egregious folly that either Bonaparte or my lord Talleyrand have been convicted of, which would justify the opinion that the French government would request the American administration to adopt a measure so destructive to the interests of the subjects and allies of his imperial and royal majesty. Every merchant's clerk knows that the Parisians cannot sip their coffee in a morning without the assistance of a neutral flag, nor sweeten that beverage, so dear to every Frenchman, without the same aid. By what conveyance will the productions of the French vineyards find a vent? The manufacturers of silks and cloths, and even the French milliners, would have cause to reproach their emperor for an interference that would produce nothing but distress to them. Spain will feel the effect of the embargo; Italy will feel it; Holland will feel it; and Germany will feel it, as well as France. All these nations are the allies of Bonaparte; yet there are individuals absurd enough to say, that French influence has swayed the councils of this nation to the act. Had the embargo extended to the prohibition of trade with the British only, there would be some plausibility in the assertion; but the universality of its operation distinctly marks it as a measure strictly impartial.

If we calmly weigh the conduct of the British government for a series of years, it might reasonably be concluded that the embargo is an act rather gratifying to them. All the measures of the cabinet of London have tended to curtail neutral commerce, and in a particular manner to prevent American ship owners from enjoying the benefits of the carrying trade. So

far had the English ministry proceeded in the spirit of this policy, that it had actually become a question for public discussion in the principal journals of Great-Britain, whether it was expedient to cut France off from all foreign trade by seizing every neutral vessel bound to her own ports or those of her allies, at which a British vessel could not enter. How, therefore, can the government of the United States give offence to the British by a restriction which so exactly coincides with their own wishes? The Americans are the only neutrals, and they having now withdrawn themselves from the ocean, Great-Britain being mistress of the seas, completely annihilates the exterior trade of the rest of Europe and enjoys the pre-eminence so anxiously sought by her of ploughing the deep without a competitor! In *such* a point of view, surely the embargo must be *gratifying* to the British.

Those who contend so strenuously, that the measure is the result of French influence, do most strangely pervert the plain evidence of facts. The object of France, if she could have been so audacious as to attempt to influence our councils at all, must have been the exclusion of British vessels and merchandize from our ports. But what is the fact? An embargo is laid which cuts off France as well as her enemies from the advantages of our neutrality, and the effect of which, from the circumstances in which the French empire is placed, she must feel far more severely than her antagonist.

It is said by the talkers and writers, who support the notion of French influence in the case, that administration had received no information from England but what had been in their possession a long time, which could induce the passage of an embargo law; and that immediately on the arrival of dispatches from France the measure was recommended to Congress by the President. Herein the gentlemen expose the fallacy of their own logic; and the very circumstance of the embargo having instantaneously followed the reception of the dispatches brought by Dr. Bullus, is conclusive evidence that it was an act of the soundest policy, which was dictated by nothing less than the sagacious foresight of the executive: For if we reflect for one moment, that the more France inforced her rigid decree against English merchandize, the more the latter has invariably extended her restrictions against neutral trade, it was as certain as any thing which has not taken place can be, that the new constructions given by the French emperor to his famous decree of November 1806, would impel the British cabinet to acts of retaliation, which could have had no other operation than to destroy that remnant of commerce which the Americans enjoyed. The promptness and energy of the government of the United States has saved our shipping, our seamen, and our merchandize, from falling a prey to the maritime encroachments of two rival powers; and the documents submitted to Congress when the embargo was recommended, (and which I shall publish in a subsequent number) fully explain the motives of the President and the policy of the measure.

THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF.—Rumor has been so impertinently loquacious on the topics of accusation against Brigadier-General James Wilkinson; and the charge exhibited by the honorable John Randolph on the floor of Congress, is of so heinous a nature, that a succinct history of the

incidents in the case cannot fail to be interesting to the people of the United States. I deem it to be my duty, publishing as I do, a Register at the seat of the general government, to collect and converge to a focus, every particle of intelligence that I can procure on the subject; which, from the peculiar crisis of our affairs, has become in an extraordinary degree important to the nation. Among a free people a military establishment is at all times an object of jealousy; and the annals of the world so impressively depict a standing army as the fatal instrument by which ambition cuts its way to despotism, that the first speck of suspicion of the integrity of the commander in chief, speedily amplifies itself with men of sublimated imaginations into a cloud of magnitude, and even affects the most sedate minds with gloomy forebodings. Suspicion, however, is a pimping quality, and is too frequently the offspring of our prejudices. Honorable men have preferred to it the road to death by treachery. The creature who can live upon suspicion, is far more pitiful than the victim of credulity; for there is a certain degree of malice in the first from which the frailty of the latter claims an exemption. But there is a vigilance and forecast of thought which is of the essence of the republican character, that is the preserving salt of free institutions. Without it the republic could not exist: It is wakeful and active: It seizes on circumstances as they arise and weighs them in the balance of the understanding: It arraigns with equal promptitude the great offender and the puny peculator: It does not fill the public mind with apprehensions on trivial occasions, nor approach its object with dark and insidious inuendo: It is open, liberal, and manly; and acts invariably for the public good. Such is the excellent spirit that ought to actuate the mind of a public accuser; and I will not insult the majesty of the assembled Representatives of the nation by presuming to suppose that their body contains a solitary individual who could so far forget the high dignity of his station, the noble sentiments that should actuate his soul, and the respect which he owes to the people at large, as to pervert the privileges of his situation, and render them subservient to the purposes of foul resentment, the indulgence of the invective of spleen, or to the effusion of that keen asperity of temper which is the never-failing companion of vanity chastised.

With these preliminary remarks, I proceed to record the incidents as they have occurred in this city; and which, ostensibly, have led to the institution of a Court of Inquiry into the conduct of Brigadier-General James Wilkinson. It is not my intention, nor is it my province, to decide in the case. It is sufficient that I submit facts for the information and consideration of the public.

On the 24th of December last, General Wilkinson transmitted the following letter to the honorable John Randolph:

Washington, Dec. 24, 1807.

SIR,

I understand that several expressions have escaped you, in their nature personal and highly injurious to my reputation. The exceptionable language imputed to you may be briefly and substantially comprized in the following statement.

That you have avowed the opinion, I was a rogue; that you have ascribed to me the infernal disposition to commit murder, to prevent the exposition of my sinister designs;

and through me, have stigmatized those citizen soldiers, who compose the meritorious military corps of our country.

No person can be more sensible of the pernicious tendency of such cruel and undeserved reflections, in their application to public men, or private individuals, than yourself; nor is any man more competent to determine the just reparation, to which they establish a fair claim.

Under these impressions, I can have no hesitation to appeal to your justice, your magnanimity, and your gallantry, to prescribe the manner and the measure of redress; being persuaded, that your decision will comport with the feelings of a man of honor, and that you will be found equally prompt to assert a right, or to repair a wrong.

I transmit this letter through the post-office, and I shall expect your answer by such channel as you may deem most proper.

I have the honor to be,
Sir,
Your obedient servant,
(Signed) J. WILKINSON.
The hon'ble John Randolph.

The next day the general received the following answer through the post-office, at 8 o'clock, P. M.

SIR,

Several months ago, I was informed of your having said, that you were acquainted with what had passed in the Grand Jury Room at *Richmond*, last spring; and that you had expressed a determination to *challenge* me. I am to consider your letter of last night, by mail, as the execution of that avowed purpose, and, through the same channel, return you my answer.

Whatever may have been the expressions used by me, in relation to your character, they were the result of deliberate opinion, founded on the most authentic evidence, the far greater part of which it was my painful duty, imposed* by my country, to weigh and to decide upon;—They were such as to my knowledge and to yours, have been delivered by hundreds of the first men in the Union, and, probably, by a full moiety of the *American* people. In you, Sir, I can recognize no right to hold me accountable for my public or private opinion of your character, that would not subject me to an equal claim from *Colonel* BURR or *Serjeant* DUNBAUGH. I cannot descend to your level. This is my final answer.

(Signed) JOHN RANDOLPH.
December 25, 1807.
Brigadier-General James Wilkinson.

To the foregoing, after a short pause for the proper course of conduct on the occasion, the General, on

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* *Without meaning to state any thing more than a fact which may serve to explain the whole truth in the case, I think it proper to observe that Mr. Randolph was not summoned on the original pannel of jurors. He had rode eighty miles to become a spectator of the scene at Richmond. Burr being permitted to purge an inquest convened for general purposes, made exception to Messrs. Giles and Nicholas, whose delicacy admitted his objections, and they were accordingly struck off. It was then that Mr. Randolph, who stood distinguished in the crowd, was summoned, and being questioned as to the bearings of his mind against Burr. did admit certain prejudices, but voluntarily avowed his competency to act without bias. He was accepted by Burr, and thus became a member of the grand-jury.*

the 28th, returned the following answer to Mr. Randolph:

Washington, December 28, 1807.

SIR,

I have received your letter of the 25th inst. by mail, in which you violate truth and honor to indulge the inherent malignity and rancor of your soul.

On what "*level*," pray Sir, shall we find the wretch, who, to masque his cowardice, fabricates falsehoods, and heaps unprovoked insults upon unmerited injuries?—*You*, JOHN RANDOLPH, *are this man*;—and your own breast can best solve the proposition.

You "cannot descend to my level." Vain, *equivocal* thing!—And do you believe this dastardly subterfuge will avail you?—or that your *lion's skin* will longer conceal your true character?—Embrace the alternative still within your reach, and *ascend* to the level of a gentleman, *if possible*;—Act, if you can, like *a man*, and spare me the pain of publishing you to the world for an *insolent, slanderous, prevaricating poltroon.*

(Signed) JA. WILKINSON.

John Randolph, Esq.

N. B. The first idea suggested by the indecency of your response to my letter, was the chastisement of my *cane*, from which the sacred respect I owe to the station you occupy in the councils of the nation, has alone protected you; and to the consequent conflict of feelings and duty, must be asscribed the delay of this note.

J. W.

On the 31st, no answer having been received, the following printed handbill was found posted up, in the most conspicuous places, throughout the city of Washington and George-Town:

A HECTOR UNMASKED!

In justice to his character, I hereby proclaim JOHN RANDOLPH, *Esquire*, to the world, for an *insolent, slanderous, prevaricating poltroon!*

JA. WILKINSON.

Washington, Dec. 31, 1807.

On the same day that the posting bill appeared, whilst the very important supplement to the embargo act was under consideration in the House of Representatives, Mr. Randolph rose and moved for its postponement, in order, as he said, to discharge "a duty which he owed not only to himself, but to the enlightened and independent freeholders who gave him a seat on that floor, and to the country at large. Within *a few days* information had been put into his possession, of a nature and on a subject which he deemed it proper for the *constituted authority* to enquire into. Had this information come earlier into his possession, he should not till now have delayed giving it publicity. He would first state certain facts, and those facts would be the ground of his motion, on which he should offer no argument." Mr. R. then read the following documents:

TRANSLATION.

In the galley the Victoria, Bernardo Molina, patron, there have been sent to Don Vincent Folch, nine thousand six hundred and forty dollars, which sum, without making the least use of it, you will hold at my disposal to deliver it at the moment that an order may be presented to you by the American gen. Don James Wilkinson. God preserve you many years.

New-Orleans, 20th Jan. 1796.

THE BARON DE CARONDELET.

To Signor Don Thomas Portell.

I certify that the foregoing is a copy of its original to which I refer.

(Signed) THOMAS PORTELL.

New Madrid, 27th June, 1796.

Fort Washington, Sept. 22, 1796.

Ill health and many pressing engagements must be my apology for a short letter. I must refer you to my letter to the baron for several particulars and for a detail of my perils and abuses. I must beg leave to refer you to our friend Power, whom I find of youthful enterprize and fidelity; he certainly deserves well of the court and I don't doubt that he will be rewarded.

What a political crisis is the present! and how deeply interesting in its probable results, in all its tendencies, and thereby must hope it may not be carried into execution. If it is, an entire reform in the police and the military establishments of Louisiana will be found immediately indispensable to the security of the Mexican provinces. I beg you to write me fully on this question in cypher by Power, whose presence in Philadelphia is necessary, as well to clear his own character attacked by Wayne, as to support the fact of the outrage recently offered to the Spanish crown in his person, and to bring me either the person or the deposition of a man now under your command, who had been suborned by Wayne to bear false witness against me; and afterwards for fear he should recant bribed him to leave Kentucky. Power will give you the perfect of this infamous transaction, and I conjure you by all the ties of friendship and of policy to assist him on this occasion. If Spain does not resent the outrage offered to Power in the face of all Kentucky; my letter to the Baron will explain the motives which carry me to Philadelphia; from thence I will write again to you. Power will explain to you circumstances which justify the belief of the great treachery that has been practised with respect to the money lately sent me. For the love of God and friendship enjoin great secrecy and caution in all our concerns. Never suffer my name to be written or spoken. The suspicion of Washington is wide awake. Beware of Bradford, the Fort Pitt refugee: he seeks to make peace—there are spies every where. We have a report here that you are appointed governor of Louisiana. God grant it, as I presume the Baron will be promoted. I am your affectionate friend. W.

Copy of a letter in cypher received from general Wilkinson. Natches, 6th of February, 1797.

(Signed) *Manuel Gayoso de Lemos.*

In a separate paper he says what follows:

This will be delivered to you by Nolan whom you know is a child of my own raising, true to his profession and firm in his attachments to Spain. I consider him a powerful instrument in our hands should occasion offer. I will answer for his conduct. I am deeply interested in whatsoever concerns him and I confidently recommend him to your warmest protection. I am evidently your affectionate WILKINSON.

A copy

(Signed) *Manuel Gayoso de Lemos.*

N. B. Don Gayoso was then governor of Natches, and the same year was made governor of Louisiana. [☞He is since dead.]

Mr. Randolph also read an extract of a letter signed *T. Power*, wherein the writer, after some introductory remarks, declares, "I actually did receive from capt. Dn. Thomas Portell, commandant of New-Madrid, the sum of 9640 $ for general Wilkinson, towards the latter end of June or beginning of July, 1796, which was packed up in the manner describ-

ed by Mr. Derbigney, and when I was stopped and my boat searched on the Ohio by lieut. Steele, under the orders of Gen. Anthony Wayne, I had other sums on board, but this was the only one I had received for General Wilkinson. On my arrival at Louisville, determined not to expose myself a second time to military insult, and fearful of being overtaken by Steele on his return, and of being again overhauled, I landed my cargo, purchased a horse, and proceeded by land to Cincinnati. As I passed through Lexington, I published in Stewart's Kentucky Herald my affidavit concerning this outrage, supported by those of the spectators of the transaction, Welsh, White and Sansom; preceded by a few strictures on this military piracy, signed Impartial. And I now take this opportunity of clearing Gen. Wilkinson of the charge of being the author of it, as is asserted by Bradford of New-Orleans, and declare it was written by myself, and that, excepting Captain Campbell Smith, no person ever saw it before it was put into the hands of the printer.

"At Cincinnati I acquainted general W. with the circumstances that had occurred, and he gave me orders to deliver the money to Mr. Philip Nolan. These orders I punctually executed. Mr. Nolan conveyed the barrels of sugar and coffee, that contained the dollars, to Frankfort, in a waggon. I there saw them opened in Mr. Montgomery Brown's store. The sugar and coffee, I afterwards sold to Mr. Abijah Hunt of Cincinnati."

In order to give the reader some idea of the general reputation of this *T. Power*, I now insert the following extract of a letter from William Wilson, lieutenant of artillery in the army of the United States, to his friend, another officer* high in rank in the same army:

"*New-Orleans, Sept. 8th*, 1807.

"SIR,

"Since your departure, Powers and *party* have sailed. He has publicly declared he will ruin the General. Indeed, I have no doubt in my mind but that *he has been bribed.* He is a RASCAL, *who can be bought and sold to answer any purpose.* It will be well to keep a good watch over him: I think, with proper management, he can be made to discover his own villainy and that of his *party.* The governor arrived a few days ago. I have had a conversation with him respecting Powers and his intended disclosures. He informed me he had it in his power to defeat any thing which he might say respecting the General, as he had made to him (the governor) a solemn declaration that he knew not one single thing against the General.

"WM. WILSON."

After Mr. Randolph had read his documents, he observed that it would be loss of time to comment on them; "but he conceived it his duty to tell the House that he had good cause to believe that there was a member of their body, who had it in his power, if the authority of the House were exercised upon him, if he were coerced, to give the House much more full, important, and *damning* evidence, than that which had already appeared. He alluded to the gentleman from the Territory of Orleans (Mr. Clarke) whom he had now the pleasure to see in his seat."

He then moved the following resolution:

"*Resolved*, That the President of the United States be requested to cause an enquiry to be instituted into

* *Not General Wilkinson.*

the conduct of Briga. Gen. James Wilkinson, commander in chief of the armies of the United States, in relation to his having, at any time, while in the service of the United States, corruptly received money from the government of Spain, or its agents."

Mr. Clarke said he "unexpectedly heard himself named, and he would observe, that it had been long supposed, from his residence in Louisiana, his acquaintance with military officers, and the various means of information which he might have possessed while consul at Orleans, that he was acquainted with certain transactions which had taken place in that country. The knowledge which he had possessed, he had endeavored to impart to the administration at different times, both verbally and by a written correspondence, to which a deaf ear had been turned. As this information had not been attended to, he had refused to gratify curiosity on the subject. And notwithstanding the gentleman's calling upon him, he felt himself bound to say, that he would not be influenced by fear, favor or affection, to give any information on the subject, except compelled by a resolution of the House."

The discussion excited by Mr. Randolph's resolution was diffusive and interesting, a lively exhibition of which will be given in the second number of the Register. From the whole tenor of the debate, it was evident that every member in the House desired an enquiry into the conduct of the General. The point of difference seemed to be, whether the House of Representatives possessed the power, under the constitution, to interpose on the occasion in the way proposed. The historical sketch that will be subsequently presented, will furnish the reader with the leading arguments on both sides of the question. One universal sentiment prevailed, both in and out of Congress, that the character of Gen. Wilkinson should be cleared of the imputation cast upon it. The commander in chief himself, after so direct and forcible a charge from a member of the legislature of so much talent and so conspicuous as Mr. Randolph, felt the propriety of an immediate investigation of his conduct as it regarded the topic of accusation urged against him. Accordingly, he addressed the following letter to the Secretary of the War Department:

(COPY.)

Washington, January 1st, 1807.

SIR,

Being informed that I have been denounced on the floor of Congress, by John Randolph, as a Spanish Pensioner, I must pray, Sir, that the President may be pleased to constitute a Court of Inquiry, to hear testimony and report their opinion on the charge, to the end that the Law may take its regular course, and furnish me an opportunity to vindicate my aspersed reputation.

With great respect,
I am Sir,
Your Obt. Servt.
(Signed) JAMES WILKINSON.

The Hon. Henry Dearborn,
Secretary of War.

Agreeably to this request, a court of inquiry was ordered, composed of Col. Williams, of the engineers; Col. Burbeck, of the artillery; and Col. Cushing, of the infantry. Walter Jones, Esq. Judge Advocate.

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It cannot but be agreeable at the present moment, whilst conveying to the public a detail of facts relative to the integrity of the commander in

chief, to draw a miniature picture of the General's military career. James Wilkinson, before he had escaped from his teens, flew to the standard of his country at the blockade of Boston, and served that campaign as a volunteer in the rifle corps under the command of Col. Thompson. In the spring following he was appointed a Captain in the 1st (Reed's) New-Hampshire regiment, and in an hour of peril and dismay, by a rapid passage across the Lakes and as rapid a march from St. John's through La Prairie and the Indian village at Cucknawaga, he joined Arnold at La Chaine above Montreal, where the latter was fortifying himself against Major Forster, of the 8th British regiment, who had taken post at the Cedars and was advancing with a large body of Indians. He was appointed aid-de-camp to the degenerate Arnold in Montreal, and being dispatched express to General Sullivan, supposed to be at Sorel, he was met and fired upon by the British advanced guard at Busherville. He returned to Montreal, gave the alarm to Arnold, and was instrumental in saving the garrison, which crossed the St. Lawrence the same night, and returned by La Prairie to St. John's the next day. An attempt being made by Arnold to employ him to plunder Montreal, much to his honor he excused himself, and took the earliest occasion to leave the family of that commander. He went express with Arnold across the lakes, from the Isle-au-Noix to Albany, with dispatches from Gen. Sullivan; left Arnold in Albany and returned express to Crown Point. The army repaired to Ticonderoga, where he was appointed by Gen. Gates a major of brigade, with the rank of a major in the army, and was soon afterwards attached to the command of Gen. St. Clair. About this time Wilkinson fell sick, and was transported to Fort George under the personal attention of the surgeon-general, Dr. Potts. Here he was given over and his coffin prepared: but the vigor of his constitution saved him. In a state of convalescence he was transported in a waggon to Fort Edward, and descended by the river and the portages to Albany, where he relapsed, and for his recovery was much indebted to the humane and friendly attention of Mrs. General Schuyler and Mrs P. Van Rensselaer. He joined Gen. Gates on his march towards the Delaware, by the Minnisink; and from Walpack crossed the Hills in quest of Gen. Washington, as Gen. Gates could get no intelligence of him. In his route he had a singular nocturnal interview with the late Col. Geo. Gibson and the present register Joseph Nourse, Esq. from whom he learned that Gen. Washington had crossed the Delaware, and that Gen. Lee with his division was near Basker-Ridge. Wilkinson pushed forward to the latter, arrived about four o'clock, P. M. delivered his dispatches; and the next morning about eleven o'clock Lee's quarters were surrounded by a British detachment under lord Harcourt, and the General carried off. Gen. Lee had finished a letter to Gen. Gates in the moment the British dragoons charged upon and dispersed the guard. Wilkinson snatched up the letter, thrusted it into his pocket, and thus secured it. In this affair, while making an attempt to rally the guard, he received a shot through his hat. In another number I will relate an anecdote respecting Gen. Lee which might with propriety be introduced here; but being pressed for room I omit it. In the memorable winter

campaign of 1776-7, Wilkinson received the gratulatory hand of Washington on the plains of Trenton, at the very moment the sword of Col. Raal was presented to him; and soon after saw Mercer fall and Leslie bleed on the heights of Princeton. The spring following he was appointed by General Washington lieutenant colonel of one of the sixteen regiments, with the choice of his colonel, and he joined Hartley. Being authorised to commission four companies, he repaired to his native state, and among the gentlemen selected, B. Stoddert Esq. was appointed a captain, who led his company to action with much gallantry at the battle of Brandywine, and was badly wounded in that affair. Returning from Maryland to Philadelphia, Wilkinson was called by General Gates on the first court-martial that ever tried an English spy under the authority of Congress. The scene was a trying one at that day, to sit in military judgment on a British subject and condemn him to death: Yet he (I think his name was Moseley) was found guilty and hung. About this time Gen. Gates, who was returning to take the command in the Northern Department, solicited young Wilkinson to accompany him. This he did, although at the sacrifice of his rank in the line, as soon as he had obtained the permission of Gen. Washington, who with some reluctance consented to his request. It is well known that the theatre of the most active operations at that period was on the Lakes and Hudson river. Thus Wilkinson, after having travelled through the various grades of Captain, Major, and Lieut. Colonel, found himself only an aid-de-camp to a major general, which drew from old Gen. Armstrong the remark, that "it was a phenomenon in military life, that a lieut. colonel should resign his commission in the line, to become a major on the staff." Wilkinson followed and overtook Gates at Albany, and was dispatched to correct the abuses that had crept into the transport service in that quarter, which he performed with alacrity and fidelity, and proceeded on to Ticonderoga, from whence he reported to the General. On the first of May 1777, Wilkinson received the commission of colonel in the army, and was appointed adjutant general in the Northern Department, in which capacity he continued to serve until the surrender of Gen. Burgoyne. Pending the occupation of Ticonderoga, Wilkinson made a narrow escape from the scalping knife, connected with which adventure is a singular anecdote relative to savage barbarity, that I shall publish hereafter. Retiring with Gen. St. Clair and the army through Vermont, then almost a wilderness, by an extensive detour they reached Fort Edward, where they found Gen. Schuyler, who had superceded Gates in the command. From this gentleman he experienced the same friendly, fatherly regards he had received from Gates. The retreat was conducted from Fort Edward to Vanschaik's Island, at the confluence of the Mohawk and Hudson river. At this position, in August Gen. Schuyler was again superceded in command by Gen. Gates, who soon after advanced upon the enemy, who met him at Behmus' Heights, a situation which had been recommended by Wilkinson, who had remarked, in passing up and down, that the high lands at that point formed a narrow defile with the river. The incidents which followed, until the convention of Saratoga, are of too high and in-

teresting import to be touched in this glance; to the page of the historian they properly belong: But for the part which Wilkinson took, I beg leave to refer to the following documents; barely stating it as an indubitable fact, that the honor conferred by the subjoined resolution of the old American Congress, was given to Wilkinson over the heads of forty-seven colonels, mostly men of standing and family, when he was not twenty years of age. His youth, and the chagrin which those officers felt at the neglect of themselves, occasioned a disatisfaction which Wilkinson was prompt to allay, by a patriotic resignation of the rank bestowed upon him by the Representatives of the people.

Extract from the journals of Congress, for 1777, November 3.

"*Ordered*, that *Col.* WILKINSON be admitted to lay before Congress this afternoon the papers relative to the affairs of the Northern Department.

"4 o'clock, P. M.

"According to order *Col.* WILKINSON attended, and delivered a message from General Gates in the following words.

"I have it in charge from Major General Gates to represent to the honourable Congress, that lieutenant-general Burgoyne at the time he capitulated was strongly intrenched on a formidable post, with twelve days' provision: that the reduction of fort Montgomery and the enemy's consequent progress up the Hudson river endangered our arsenal at Albany; a reflection, which left General Gates no time to contest the capitulation with lieutenant-general Burgoyne, but induced the necessity of immediately closing with his proposals, hazarding a disadvantageous attack, or retiring from his position for the security of our magazine: This delicate situation abridged our conquests and procured lieutenant general Burgoyne the terms he enjoys. Had our attack been carried against lieutenant-general Burgoyne, the dismemberment of our army must necessarily have been such as would have incapacitated it from further action. With an army in health, vigor and spirits, major-general Gates now waits the commands of the honorable Congress.

"Colonel Wilkinson then laid before Congress sundry original papers relative to the convention, and withdrew.

"Thursday, Nov. 6.

"The board of war brought in a report, which was taken into consideration; whereupon,

"*Resolved*, that *Col.* JAMES WILKINSON, *Adjutant-General in the Northern Army*, in consideration of his services in that department, and being strongly recommended by General Gates, as a gallant officer and a promising military genius, and having brought the dispatches to Congress, giving an account of the surrender of lieutenant-general Burgoyne and his army, on the 17th day of October last, be continued in his present employment, with a brevet of *Brigadier General* in the army of the United States."

A further mark of the confidence of Congress in General Wilkinson, at this time, appears by the following extract from their journals.

"Tuesday, January 6, 1778.

"Congress proceeded to the election of a *Secretary to the Board of War and Ordonance*, and the ballots being taken, JAMES WILKINSON, *Esq.* was elected."

"Friday, March 6th, 1778.

"A letter of the 3d, from JAMES

WIKLINSON was read, setting forth, that "he is informed the mark of distinction conferred on him has occasioned a dissatisfaction in the army;" that "to obviate any embarrassment which may result from this disposition, by the consequent resignation of officers of merit, he begs leave to relinquish his brevet of Brigadier, *wishing to hold no commission, unless he can wear it to the honor and advantage of his country;*" and that "this conduct, however repugnant to fashionable ambition, he finds *consistent with those principles on which he early drew his sword* in the present contest."

"*Resolved*, That his resignation be accepted."

This narrative will be resumed next week, and continued down to the present period.

AFTER *the lapse of more time than the Editor had originally contemplated, but which it has been out of his power to shorten, he has the satisfaction of presenting to his patrons the first number of the* WEEKLY REGISTER *from Washington City; and confidently assures them that it shall be published regularly hereafter every Saturday morning, and punctually forwarded to subscribers agreeably to their directions.*

Previously to his removal to this city, the Editor had issued three numbers of the work. The suspension that has unavoidably taken place, has occasioned a chasm which it would require much labor and time to fill up, and which would prevent an immediate entry on the topics now before the public, were it attempted. The Editor has preferred, therefore, a commencement of his work DE NOVO: *Of course this paper will appear as No.* 1, *and the three numbers already published, will not be charged to those who have received them.*

Sufficient has perhaps already been published to explain the nature of the work. But as there may be many who have not had an opportunity of perusing any of the numbers that have been heretofore issued from the press, the following passage from a late prospectus is inserted; and it goes at once to shew the intention of the Editor and his reasons for publishing the Register at this place:

"The City of Washington, being the seat of the government of the United States, is undoubtedly the place at which the most exact political information can be obtained: where all those documents, intended to be embodied in the work in question, may be procured in an authentic shape—and where, *alone*, the editor can attain that accuracy in tracing the proceedings of Congress, which it is his desire to identify and place in a proper point of view before the public eye: These constitute his leading motives for removal: And as the work is on a national scale, for the preservation, as it were in a record, of the material acts arising out of the administration of the government, together with a correct view of the policy on which they are bottomed, the subscriber conceives that the members of the national legislature in particular, and the public at large, will feel willing to patronize an undertaking, which, from its nature, is so well calculated to diffuse throughout the union generally, the most correct intelligence on the most interesting topics relative to the management of the public concerns."

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